REMARKS

As a result of the above amendments, Claims 1, 5-13, and 15-23 remain pending. Claims 1, 5-13, and 15-23 have been herein amended. Claims 2-4 and 14 have been canceled. Claims 24-94 have been withdrawn, without prejudice, for ease of prosecution at this stage. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added by this Reply. Accordingly, Claims 1, 5-13 and 15-23 are at issue.

In summary, the present invention is drawn to a method for distributing a plurality of digital article files received from different authors and/or submitters, for purchase by plurality of different buyers through a central computer system, such as a website, and utilizing micro-pricing. Specifically, referring to Claim 1, as amended, the present invention is directed to a method for distributing a plurality of digital article files for a price within a micro-price range. The method receives at a central computer first author information from a first client computer for establishing a first author account associated with and utilizing the first author information. The first author account has a first author account value, and the first author account has a first author identifier for at least logging into the central computer from the first client computer. The method also receives at the central computer a first digital article file from the first client computer. The first digital article file includes a first digital article which is associated with the first author identifier. The method further receives at the central computer a first digital article micro-price within the micro-price range from the first client computer for establishing a first price to charge buyers for the first digital article. The method also stores the first digital article file in a memory associated with the central computer, the first digital article file being retrievable from the memory.

Likewise, the method receives at the central computer second author information, distinct from the first author information, from a second client computer for establishing a second author account associated with and utilizing the second author information. The second author account has a second author account value, and has a second author identifier for at least logging into the central computer from the second client computer. The method also receives at the central computer a second digital article file from the second client computer. The second digital article file includes a second digital article which is associated with the second author identifier. The

method further receives at the central computer a second digital article micro-price within the micro-price range from the second client computer for establishing a second price to charge buyers for the second digital article. The method also stores the second digital article file in the memory, with the second digital article file being retrievable from the memory.

In addition., the method receives at the central computer first buyer information from a third client computer for establishing a first buyer account associated with and utilizing the first buyer information. The first buyer account has a first buyer account value, and has a first buyer identifier for at least logging into the central computer from the third client computer. The method further receives at the central computer a first buyer payment for increasing the first buyer account value from the third client computer. The method also receives at the central computer a request for the purchase of the first digital article file from the third client computer. The method further debits the first buyer account by decreasing the first buyer account value an amount relating to the first digital article micro-price, and likewise credits the first author account by increasing the first author account value an amount relating to the first digital article micro-price. The method also transmits the first digital article file to the third client computer in response to the request for the purchase of the first digital.

Likewise, the method receives at the central computer second buyer information from a fourth client computer for establishing a second buyer account associated with and utilizing the second buyer information. The second buyer account has a second buyer account value, and has a second buyer identifier for at least logging into the central computer from the fourth client computer. The method also receives at the central computer a second buyer payment for increasing the second buyer account value from the fourth client computer. The method further receives at the central computer a request for the purchase of the second digital article from the fourth client computer. The method also debits the second buyer account by decreasing the second buyer account value an amount relating to the second digital article micro-price, and credits the second author account by increasing the second author account value an amount relating to the second digital article micro-price. The method further transmits the second digital article file to the fourth client computer in response to the request for the purchase of the second digital article.

Remarks Concerning Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

In the Office Action of July 3, 2006, the Examiner rejected Claims 15, 22-23, 38, 45-46, 48-49, 64, 72-73, and 88 § 112, second paragraph, alleging that the phrase "micro-price range" has insufficient antecedent basis, and alleging that it is unclear whether the phrases "micro-price range" and "micro-pricing" are equivalent. Applicants have amended Claim 1 to specifically call out that the method is directed to "distributing a plurality of digital article files for a price within a micro-price range." Applicants have also amended Claim 1 to specifically call out that the method receives at the central computer "a first digital article micro-price within the micro-price range" for establishing a first price to charge buyers for the first digital article. Likewise, Applicants have amended Claim 1 to specifically call out that the method receives at the central computer "a second digital article micro-price within the micro-price range" for establishing a second price to charge buyers for the second digital article. Applicants believe that the terms micro-price range, first micro-price, second micro-price, as well as predetermined micro-price range within Claim 15 have proper antecedent basis and are clear. Claims 22-23 do not include any of these terms, except as provided in Claim 1. The remaining rejected claims have been withdrawn. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Remarks Concerning Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office Action, the Examiner also rejected Claims 1-94 as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(1) over U.S. Patent No. 5,629,980 to *Stefik* et al. ("*Stefik*") in view of EP Patent No. EP 1 255 213 A2 to *Chatani* ("*Chatani*"). In light of the amendments made herein, Applicants believe that the claims are in condition for allowance.

Stefik is directed to a system for controlling the distribution and use of digital works. *Stefik* provides for access to digital works for the purposes of transporting between repositories using a digital work transport protocol. Usage rights are assigned to the digital works. The check of the usage rights involves a determination of whether the right associated with an access request has been attached to the digital work and if all conditions associated with the right are satisfied. If access is denied, the session is terminated. If access is granted, then the repository transmits the digital work to the other repository. Once the digital work is transmitted, billing information is generated for the access, which is transmitted to a credit server. (Col. 7, lines 26-

37). In addition, the repository requires possession of an identification certificate. Identification certificates are encrypted to prevent forgery and are issued by a master repository. A master repository plays the role of an authorization agent to enable repositories to receive digital works. Identification certificates must be updated on a periodic basis. (Col. 13, lines 59-65). Thus, while *Sefik* discloses significant structure and steps to download digital works, including having usage rights assigned to the digital works and using identification certificates for a repository, such as the "other" repository (user's repository) to receive digital works, many steps and elements of Claim 1 of the present invention are not disclosed or taught in *Stefik*.

   Chatani is directed to a system and computer-based method for providing customized test content ratings and/or review or recommendations based on information concerning the text that a customer has read. The system includes a book database and a customer database for searching, retrieving and comparing data from the databases. Customers can register information about books that the customer has read, or select from a list of books within the database, and can provide information about the customer's evaluation of the book. While *Chatani* discloses structure and steps to register information and evaluations about books for later use by others, many steps and elements of Claim 1 of the present invention are not disclosed or taught in *Chatani*.

   As provided above, the present invention requires a plurality of different digital article files received from different authors and/or submitters, for purchase by plurality of different buyers through a central computer system, such as a website, and utilizing micro-pricing. Specifically, the method of Claim 1 receives at a central computer first author information from a first client computer for establishing a first author account associated with and utilizing the first author information. The first author account has a first author account value, and the first author account has a first author identifier for at least logging into the central computer from the first client computer. The method also receives at the central computer a first digital article file from the first client computer. The first digital article file includes a first digital article which is associated with the first author identifier. The method further receives at the central computer a first digital article micro-price within the micro-price range from the first client computer for establishing a first price to charge buyers for the first digital article. The method also stores the

first digital article file in a memory associated with the central computer, the first digital article file being retrievable from the memory.

Likewise, the method receives at the central computer second author information, distinct from the first author information, from a second client computer for establishing a second author account associated with and utilizing the second author information. The second author account has a second author account value, and has a second author identifier for at least logging into the central computer from the second client computer. The method also receives at the central computer a second digital article file from the second client computer. The second digital article file includes a second digital article which is associated with the second author identifier. The method further receives at the central computer a second digital article micro-price within the micro-price range from the second client computer for establishing a second price to charge buyers for the second digital article. The method also stores the second digital article file in the memory, with the second digital article file being retrievable from the memory.

In addition, the method receives at the central computer first buyer information from a third client computer for establishing a first buyer account associated with and utilizing the first buyer information. The first buyer account has a first buyer account value, and has a first buyer identifier for at least logging into the central computer from the third client computer. The method further receives at the central computer a first buyer payment for increasing the first buyer account value from the third client computer. The method also receives at the central computer a request for the purchase of the first digital article file from the third client computer. The method further debits the first buyer account by decreasing the first buyer account value an amount relating to the first digital article micro-price, and likewise credits the first author account by increasing the first author account value an amount relating to the first digital article micro-price. The method also transmits the first digital article file to the third client computer in response to the request for the purchase of the first digital.

Likewise, the method receives at the central computer second buyer information from a fourth client computer for establishing a second buyer account associated with and utilizing the second buyer information. The second buyer account has a second buyer account value, and has a second buyer identifier for at least logging into the central computer from the fourth client computer. The method also receives at the central computer a second buyer payment for

increasing the second buyer account value from the fourth client computer. The method further receives at the central computer a request for the purchase of the second digital article from the fourth client computer. The method also debits the second buyer account by decreasing the second buyer account value an amount relating to the second digital article micro-price, and credits the second author account by increasing the second author account value an amount relating to the second digital article micro-price. The method further transmits the second digital article file to the fourth client computer in response to the request for the purchase of the second digital article.

Neither *Stefik* and/or *Chatani*, alone or in combination disclose, teach or suggest the above-underlined limitations and steps of amended Claim 1. Claim 1 specifies significant aspects of the present invention, including being able to set up accounts for multiple distinct authors/submitters of digital articles, receiving digital articles from multiple distinct authors/submitters of digital articles, with the articles being associated with the respective authors/submitters, allowing authors/submitters to assign a micro-price within a micro-price range to each digital article, being able to set up multiple distinct buyer accounts and establishing a value for each buyer account, and debiting the value of a buyer account as well as crediting an author account an amount related to the micro-price of the author's digital article which such buyer has requested for downloading or transmission. Thus, the present invention allows for the free exchange of digital articles and the creative content therein, between many authors/submitters and many buyers within a price range which induces high volume of exchange, while at the same time allowing for efficient transaction processing of micro-payments through the use of crediting and debiting of established author and buyer accounts. Thus, Applicants believe that amended Claim 1 is novel and non-obvious over *Stefik* in view of *Chatani*, and respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection and allowance of Claim 1.

The Examiner also rejected Claims 5-13 and 15-23 as being obvious over *Stefik* in view of *Chatani*. However, Claims 5-13 and 15-23 include additional significant steps and limitations over cited references. Further, as Claims 5-13 and 15-23 necessarily include all of the steps and limitations of Claim 1, for the reasons stated above, Applicants believe that Claims 5-13 and 15-23 are also novel and non-obvious over the cited references, and respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections and allowance of Claim 5-13 and 15-23.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks made herein, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 5-13 and 15-23 are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections and allow the pending claims. Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned Attorney regarding the present invention if the Examiner has any questions or would like discuss the present invention.

Respectfully submitted,

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